



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

May 12, 2004

Mr. Bradley C. Smith, Chairman
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20463

Dear Bradley:

I am writing in response to recent media reports that the Commission is considering postponing issuing new rules for the regulation of 527 organizations for an additional 90 days.

I believe the Commission's responsibility to expeditiously clarify and properly enforce the federal election laws with respect to 527 organizations is clear, and oppose further delay on this paramount issue.

I do not believe, for example, that the arguments presented by the General Counsel for delaying activity in any way apply to the essential need for revising the incorrect existing Federal Election Commission allocation rules that are being used by outside groups to spend 98 percent soft money on activities to influence the 2004 presidential elections. The Commission has a clear obligation to act on this issue now.

It was my understanding the Commission planned to vote as early as May 13, on a proposal put forward by Commissioners Scott Thomas and Michael Toner April 30, to close the 527 loopholes and correct past misinterpretations by the Commission of the Federal Election Campaign Act.

The Toner-Thomas proposal is a strong, bipartisan solution to a problem that needs fixing. In order to protect the integrity of our campaign finance laws in the 2004 federal elections, I believe the Commission must act now to approve it and make it effective immediately.

Congressman
Christopher Shays
Fourth District Connecticut

Offices:

10 Middle Street, 11th Floor
Bridgeport, CT 06604-4223

Government Center
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06901-2927

1126 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515-0704

Telephones:

BRIDGEPORT: 579-5870
NORWALK: 866-6469
RIDGFIELD: 438-5953
SHELTON: 402-0426
STAMFORD: 357-8277
WASHINGTON, DC: 202/225-5541

E-mail:

rep.shays@mail.house.gov

Internet:

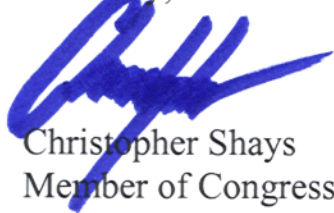
www.house.gov/shays

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To do nothing would be to condone loopholes that will have grave consequences for the efficacy of the federal election laws and again leave the public with the impression that the election laws can be circumvented without any consequence. This result, coming so soon after Congress closed the last loophole created by the Commission, would be most unfortunate.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Shays", is written over the printed name and title.

Christopher Shays
Member of Congress

CS:dr